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- **CHIAPAS TALKS** — Amid renewed tension and a surge in political killings which have left at least 10 people dead in Chiapas, government negotiators and Zapatista rebels met in the seventh round of peace talks.
- **BATTERED BOLSA** — Amid signs investors are running out of patience, the Mexican Stock Exchange and the peso were battered again, continuing a slide that began last week.
- **CASINO TOURISM** — Amidst tense debate over casino legalization, tourist resorts are already ordering large quantities of gambling supplies in preparation for a new era of tourism in Mexico, casino industrialists said.

MEXICO

- **MASSACRE REMEMBERED** — Political leaders recalled the 27th anniversary of the student massacre at Tlatelolco and asked that those whose lives were taken did not die in vain. **Page 4**
- **ZEDILLO PRAISED** — The Zedillo administration "is open to dialogue and to the distribution of responsibilities between political powers at different levels," Social Development Secretary Carlos Rojas Gutierrez said. **Page 4**

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The News is a newspaper of record and wants to correct errors quickly. Please direct corrections and clarifications to **EDITOR DAN DIAL** as soon as possible.
TELEPHONE: 512-5044, 510-9623 FAX: 521-8550

HECTOR FERNANDEZ PIÑA

'Ambient Experience' Radio

By ANTHONY WRIGHT
The News Staff Reporter



JONATHAN WHITAKER
Hector Fernandez Piña has an "ambient experience" radio program — "Noche Magica" on Mexico City's 96.9 WFM.

Do you know the fire? How do you hear the earth? Can you touch the wind? What is the smell of water?

These are questions asked by Hector Fernandez Piña, whose "ambient experience" radio program — "Noche Magica" on Mexico City's 96.9 WFM — seeks to explore the realm of the senses in a way he believes modern man is forgetting.

Fernandez, 27, has also been actively engaged in staging unusual "sensorama" events in the city, which serves as the basis for a university thesis he is completing on the subject. As many as a hundred people at once have participated in the unique sensory perception experiments which are his brainchild.

Fernandez has also formed the Light Department, an experimental art production company with filmmaker Angel Flores, of Producciones Kitch.

The News recently spoke with this visionary artist.

What goes in your radio show?

In the show I say like grab a candle and touch it. When you're holding the candle you call to the station and tell me about those perceptions. . . what you feel when you touch it, what you smell. . .

Then we move to the abstract process and make a confluence between the candle and music. In this way, we put together the concrete and the abstract.

The event went on for two hours and then after it we invited the people to discuss their impressions over a beer

senses experience the essence of an object, then our intellectual reasoning tells us what it is.

So our first masters of philosophy are our feet, our hands, our eyes. But our senses are slowly being castrated by mechanized society.

Once I did a show from my bathtub. I said "OK, who's in a bathtub? Someone here in town right now if somebody's in a bathtub, let's communicate." We make the concrete thing then connect with the music.

I've also done the show while skydiving . . .

How and where did you do that?

Well, I did it from a plane over Cuautla (state of Morelos). I recorded myself with a walkie-talkie while I was free-falling, and we sent the signal to Mexico City. It's was like "OK, I'm about to go! I'm about to go" — wahlhhh! a rush of air — and me sort of screaming on the way down.

It's very much an interactive kind of radio show. That's what's essential: to share the experience.

What do you hope to achieve from it?

I want to make it clear that it's pretty scientific. It's not just a culture of perception, but something based on scientific forms. My thesis this year is to explore through the writings of Rousseau, Nietzsche, Umberto Eco . . . the metaphysics of how we perceive the earth, wind, fire and water. The four elements.

But those guys are philosophers, writers, not scientists . . .

Yeah, but my thesis is based on a scientific method. I evaluate my findings from the sensorama events I stage.

Can you explain more about the "sensoramas?"

I call them "perception reunions," and my third one was staged Sept. 30 at the Ipuana Azul club in Colonia Roma. The sensorama, if you will, is a place, an atmosphere created to establish special perceptory effects.

As I say, I concentrated on the four elements. We created the smells, the touch and the music.

For example, we covered all the floor with water, and the music was very liquid, water-based: dolphins, whales — that is the precise meaning of "ambient" music in the first place. And mixed live music with the recorded music.

thesis, the principle objective of which is to recreate the balance between the information and the experience.

The last one we had a hundred people — from little kids to the elderly.

Do you think modern life is moving too fast?

Well, I think we are getting away from the essence of life. There's too much information in this age. Life isn't just about that. We need to redirect our perceptions and create a balance.

What do you think of the direction of computer technology and its artistic applications, say, with virtual reality?

That's a hard question. We want people to get back to the reality of experience. If you talk about virtual reality then you're talking about the opposite extreme: a synthetic world. My interest lies in the organic. But even so, I believe a balance is possible with technology.

What is physically required of the subjects in the sensory perception experiments?

They take off their shoes and we blindfold them. Don't bring jewelry and don't bring fear. This thing is about trust. We keep the experiments on a very safe and hygienic level.

When your visual communication is removed your guide is gone. Questions like "how do blind people dream?" take on a special impetus when you realize they have had no visual reference points to start with. I could tell a blind person the sky is red and he'd have no reason to disbelieve me. Then again how does he perceive color?

I myself went around blindfolded for two days. I got to "blind" myself, so to speak. It was an experience.

I went to a restaurant, ordered scrambled eggs. The gravity was totally different. Everything changes. I went to the movies, the bullfights. The communications you gain develop your overall perceptions. It was beautiful . . .

But it's preferable to see . . .

You get a balance. When your sight is returned after that sensory deprivation, you appreciate all your senses so much more. Real life is more and we can't take it for granted.